



NEWS



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CALIFORNIA'S AMBER ALERT PROGRAM: A DECADE OF SUCCESS

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – When a child is abducted, every second counts. The California Highway Patrol (CHP) has been responsible for the swift coordination of the state's AMBER Alert program. Since July 2002, this program has led to the safe recovery of 234 children.

“This remarkable accomplishment is a reflection of the hard work and partnerships established between the public, the state's broadcasters, Caltrans, the National Weather Service, the California Lottery, and law enforcement agencies throughout the state,” said CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow. “Everyone involved plays an important role in the successful location of a child.”

Equally impressive, as the state's AMBER Alert success rate, is the growth of the program since it originated. In addition to getting the word out through broadcasters and Changeable Message Signs on the highway, notifications of an AMBER Alert are now made via social media, wireless communication, and the California Lottery. This represents an important expansion of the secondary distribution system and dramatically increases the reach and impact of these lifesaving bulletins.

The AMBER Alert network originated in Texas more than 16 years ago after 9-year-old Amber Hagerman was abducted and murdered. The AMBER Alert system, which is designed to help recover missing or abducted children, was later developed and named in her honor. AMBER stands for America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response.

California introduced the AMBER Alert concept in 1999 as a regional program. The system was adopted statewide after former state Senator George Runner, who now serves as an elected member of the State Board of Equalization, wrote the original bill in 2002 that created California's AMBER Alert System.

“The state of California needed a system to assist in recovering our children safe and sound,” said former Senator Runner. “I'm pleased to have been instrumental in the success of California's AMBER Alert network.”

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Today, all 50 states, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have AMBER Alert plans. This lifesaving program has resulted in the recovery of nearly 600 children overall; more than one-third of those cases are from California.

“Anytime an AMBER Alert is issued, my heart sinks because I know a child’s life is in danger,” added Commissioner Farrow. “I am also confident in the AMBER Alert program and know that everyone involved in the recovery process, including the public, are doing everything possible to bring that child home safely to their loved ones.”

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